PROBLEMS AND POLICY MEASURES OF SURVIVAL AND PROTECTION OF GIRL CHILDREN IN RAJARHAT BLOCK: A GEOGRAPHICAL APPRAISAL

SYNOPSIS

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I. Introduction:

India is a modern nation and are proud to be citizens of the largest political democracy in the world today. The citizens have freedom of expression and association, a track record of holding elections with reasonable regularity and public institutions such as legislature, executive and judiciary that are quite stable, specially so for post colonial State. Our Constitution captures the essence of human spirit and celebrates the finest principles of equality, social justice and human dignity and guarantees rights to its citizens. Yet the nation witnesses to the growth of inequalities between those who have and the multitudes of those who are left out of the good effects of independence. They live in fear and anxiety, unsure about their work and wages, feeling vulnerable, insecure. They too are citizens of modern India yearning for freedom and dignity. It is only when they too are included in sharing the economic and political resources of our country. For as all of us know a successful democracy is the ability of the state to reach out of the weakest, include then in all planning and ensure their well being.

The weakest and marginalized are the poor and children, and specially girls. The agony of the girl is further compounded by the fact that she is born a girl when she is allowed to be born at all. A successful democracy is that which learns to respect its children, enables their blossoming to their fullest potential.

II. Statement of the problems:

Thus, it is our duty to ensure equality, safety among the needed section of our society- that is the poorer section of the society and specially the girl children. Deep rooted preference for sons and aversions to daughters, aided by technological advances in reproductive technologies leading to sex determination and sex selective abortion and week implementation of law to protect women and girl child, have lead to a steep decline in child sex ratio (0-6years). Census 2011 highlighted the increasingly adverse by showing a CSR in India showing a 8 point decline to 919 girls per 1000 boys from 927 in 2001.

This continuous decline in girl children over at least the past three decades has been amatter of serious concern. While in the earlier census this decline was sharp in the northern states of Punjab 798 (82 points), Haryana 819 (59 points), Himachal Pradesh 896 and Chandigarh 845 (54 points), Gujarat 883 and Delhi868 (58 points) between 1991 and 2001.There has been an increase in CSR in case of Punjab by 48 points, Haryana 11 points, Himachal Pradesh 10 points, Chandigarh 22 points and Gujarat 3 points. Although there has been a moderate increase in CSR in Punjab and Haryana, it continues to be below 850. It reveals that girl child is still a peril.

This dangerous trend has been noted in the CSR of Jammu Kashmir in the 2011 census from 2001 where it has declined to 859 (82 points). In Uttarakhand it is declined by 22 points, Rajasthan by 26 points or more in Jharkhand, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Maharastra and Andhra Pradesh and by 10 points in West Bengal.

Although the urban areas are worse than the rural areas, the divide is unfortunately decreasing. The upwardly mobile aspiration of the rural population has led to them adopting the practices of urban and prosperous population. The urban CSR stands at 902 compared to the rural CSR of 919 now. While CSR in urban areas has declined by 6 points from 2001, the CSR in rural areas has fallen by 15 points between 2001 and 2011.

In India the trend of decline in child sex ratio (CSR), defined as number of girls per 1000 boys between 0-6 years of age, has been unabated since 1961. While it was 945 in 1991, it declined to 927 in 2001 and further to 918 in 2o11.This scenario can only be described as alarming for it is indicative towards women disempowerment.

Further, this trend will led in future a totally imbalanced population structure which will hamper the growth of ideal social and cultural environment, expected by a nation. The great democracy such as ours will disrupt. The social structure of Indian city is very complicated. The rate of literacy in many state is low, sometimes, intra-state variation is also vast..Because in some States education is associated with caste, religion, ethnicity and of course with gender. The female gender is always neglected by their respective families, communities and societies. So a girl has to overcome various barriers to reach to educational institute. Basically, it is very much uncertain for girl child to be born in our society, then the question of attending school will come.

III. Literature Survey:

Many scholars throughout the country and world has gone through this serious problem-tried to seek the nature and root of the problem, to suggest the remedy of the problem. S.B.Agnihotri pointed out that, the results of the first population census of the millennium reveals a number of significant changes in the sex ratio in the country. Firstly, the sex ratio declined among the children in the 0-6 years age group turns to be sharper in the urban areas (32 points) than in the rural areas. It can also be notice that the decline in the urban female-male ratio among children in most of the states is significantly larger compare to that in the rural areas. It has the dubious distinction of having largest number of 'missing women' in the world along with China. Amartya Sen (1991) estimated that there are 100 million missing women in the world which indicates the magnitude of female surviving disadvantages due to unequal treatment. According to Dr. Ruchi Gaur and S. Anand, the deficit of women in India can be treated historically. The practice of female infanticide and low female ratio was documented back in 1789 in the reports of British Officials. In present times, we find rampant misuse of medical technologies are being misused for knowing the sex of the foetus with the intention of aborting it, if it happens to be that of a female. This attitude is rooted to in a complex set of social, cultural and economic factors. The practice of dowry, lack of economic independence, social customs and tradition have relegate of the girl child seems to be universal phenomena specially in north western part of India. Panigrahi (1963) in her book titled 'British social policy and the female infanticide' elucidated that in several districts of Punjab, Rajasthan and western shores in Gujarat, Surat, Kutch female infanticide was practiced which did not arise out of any superstition or religious motive, it was out of social institutions and customs.

The measure components of imbalances in overall and child sex ratio include sex ratio at birth, sex differentials in mortality, migration and under enumeration of women and girls. Sex ration varies by regions, by social group, age group and level of prosperity. The latest census in 2011 has recorded a significant decrease in the sex ratio of children age 0 to 6. Many researchers attributed the decline in the sex ratio to a possible rise in the sex ratio at birth owing to the increasing incidence of sex selective abortion as stated by Gupta and Bhat, 1997, Sudha and Rajan, 1999.

Historically low sex ratio in India is mainly attributed to excess female child mortality as stated by Visaria, 1971. However, accelerated fall in the child sex ratio after 1981 is largely due to the deffusion of parental sex selection techniques in regions with well entrenched gender biased as stated by Bhat, 2002. Biologically sex ratio at birth is always in favour of males, with about 105 boys per 100 girls. A statistical study of registered birth in 75 territories with a relatively complete vital registration has confirmed the widely held belief that the male ratio at birth varies generally between 104 and 107(male and female). Sex ration at birth greater than 107 may suggest evidence of sex selective

abortion. Previous studies also indicated that in India sex selective abortion is higher among urban women, middle and higher educated women and women leaving in households with high standard of leaving as stated by Retherford and Roy, 2003. In this context although it is inspired from the worrying facts of continuously strengthening tendency towards discrimination against women through integration of prevailing traditional gender biased norms and modern technology.

IV. Objective of the study:

The present study possesses the following objectives:-

i. To find out the distribution of child sex ratio and sex ratio at birth over time and space and to get the idea of female foeticide.
ii. To study the socio-economic background of the family and cultural setting of minds of the people.
iii. To show the association of child sex ratio (CSR) with various socio-cultural and demographic variables.
iv. To study the effect of socio-economic factors on the pattern of child sex ratio.
v. To eliminate all the forms of discrimination against the girl child and the root causes of son preference which results in harmful and unethical practices regarding female infanticide and pre-natal sex determination.
vi. To increase public awareness of the value of girl and their status.
vii. To improve the welfare of the girl child, specially in regard to health, nutrition.
viii. To find out the impact of the strategies taken by the state and central government in the form of "Beti Bachao Beti Padhao Yojona", "Sukanya Samriddhi Yojona", "Kanyashree Prakalpo" and to examine the nature of beneficial effects and demerits arising out of all those.

V. Nature and sources of data:

Data will be collected from both the primary and secondary sources. Different types of data will be required. As for example, the data regarding the total male and female population, total male and female children (0-6 years), total literate male and female, total SC and ST population of the area, total male, female workers, marginal workers etc. data will be collected from secondary sources. The secondary sources include census reports of different years.

Besides all these, some other data which will be collected by questionnaire survey.

VI. Methodology:

The entire methodology could be divided into three parts. These are namely: – (a) Pre-field, (b) Field and c) Post-field. Although the 3(three) parts are separately identified as signified yet sometimes one may overlap others. As for example the post- research enquiries may overlap on field methodology and vice-versa.

a) Pre-Field:

Pre-field methodology means the research activities which are performed prior to the field work. It includes two components-

1. Selection of study area like Gram Panchayat which have comparatively low CSR in villages and households. All the Gram Panchayats are taken into consideration and one from each G.P. should be selected for intensive study. While selecting the households some other parameters should be considered like caste, religion, economic background of the respondents.

2. Preparation of questionnaire is another important component where at first different basic questions are set according to the objective of the study. So the answers of the questions will satisfy the analysis of the study. After setting of this trial questionnaire, the research scholar has approached to her study area and carryout her household survey.

b) Field:

As the selection of study area and households for study are done then the scholar will start her work. In this part sometimes she may find some difficulty to get correct answers from the respondents. In that case the scholar should re-frame the questions differently.

c) Post-Field:

After the collection of raw data those will be enlisted in a master table were questions are elaborately. The master table of the data which are scale and size biased these are needed to be transformed into scale and size free by applying appropriate statistical techniques. Thus the raw data are converted into indicators. Then these indicators will be statistically processed and tables are formulated. Besides different cartographic techniques are also applied which will help to visualize the real world situation of the study area. Sometimes G.I.S. techniques will be applied by which scientific map will be prepared. The cause and effect relationships of the indicators will be shown by means of linkage diagrams. Then all these statistical tables, maps and diagrams are analyzed systematically through scientific procedure which will complete the entire thesis.

VII. LOCATION AND SELECTION OF THE STUDY AREA:

Rajarhat Community Development Block under North 24-Parganas district of West Bengal has been selected for the present study. At present the Block has 30(thirty) villages and 09(nine) Census Towns. So it is a Block where both Rural and Urban areas are found; but Rural areas are predominant. Before 1990s the area was very much underdeveloped, small village dominated area where agricultural activity was the main source of income.

Though it is situated very close to the Metropolitan City of Kolkata still it was to some extent isolated.

After 1990s a vast of land from Rajarhat CD Block was acquired by the Govt. of West Bengal for setting up a Satellite City. After that the entire character of the residents were changed- their occupation, ethnic composition and attitude etc.

In this new situation when the isolated character of the Block vanished, the new attitude and occupation of the residents affect their attitude towards the female children and women as a whole. The census reports reveal that the CSR is declining through decade. In this study the reasons for declining trend of CSR will be discussed and analyzed simultaneously and the remedial measures will be suggested accordingly.

VIII. Chapter Scheme:

The present study will be attended by means of following chapters -

1. ***Introduction***
   (a) Conceptual framework,
   (b) Statement of Problems,
   (c) Research Questions,
   (d) Methodology-(i) Pre-field, (ii) Field,(iii) Post-field
   (e) Location and Selection of the study area,
   (f) Chapter Scheme.

2. **Literature Survey and Review.**
3. **Historical Perspective of Survival of Girl Children.**
4. **Geographical Appraisal of the study area,**
5. **Socio-economic characteristic of Households of girl children.**
6. **Distribution of Child Sex Ratio and Sex Ration at birth.**
7. **Survival and Protective Measure of the newly born female babies and availability of health care facilities.**
8. **Parental efforts for complete immunization of female babies.**
9. **Causes and Strategies to alleviate the issues of female child mortality.**
10. **Impact of "Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao Yojona", " Sukanya Samriddhi Yojona" and " Kanyashree Prokalpa" on the Society.**

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